



Sen. Joyce Mulliken's UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA 2/27/04

Sen. Joyce Mulliken
P.O. Box 40413
109A Irv Newhouse Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 786-7624
Mulliken_jo@leg.wa.gov
1-800-562-6000

Committee Assignments

Land Use & Planning (Chair)
Highways & Transportation
Commerce & Trade
Natural Resources, Energy
& Water (Ex officio member)

Responsible Budgeting

* The net spending in the Senate budget is \$145 million less than the budget being considered by the House.
* Every \$1 of new spending adds \$3 to the projected billion-dollar shortfall next biennium.
* Enacting efficiency improvements – The Senate budget reduces state travel and consulting contracts by 10 percent.

Join my 13th District House colleagues and me every Tuesday morning at 9:00 am on KBSN, 1470 AM in Moses Lake. I encourage you to tune in and learn more about what's happening in Olympia. You can even call the show and ask questions on the air!

Dear Friends,

We're entering the homestretch of this 60-day session. While several key issues like our state's primary system, tort reform and teacher strikes remain undecided, one of the most important aspects of this session – passing a supplemental budget – has taken a large step towards fruition.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Senate passed a supplemental budget that continues to protect our state's most vulnerable citizens while embracing fiscal restraint. Last year, we faced a \$2.8 billion shortfall, yet we proved that it was possible to be fiscally conservative with a social conscience. I believe our supplemental budget follows those same footsteps.

The Senate budget leaves \$388 million in the emergency reserve account, includes no new taxes and represents the slowest-growing budget in Washington state history! Some of the highlights include:

- Restoration of funding for the retired senior volunteer program (RSVP);
- Increased the medical indigent grant to hold rural hospitals harmless;
- Funded retired volunteer rural providers by helping pick up the insurance tab for physicians in underserved areas who come out of retirement to volunteer their services;
- Fully funded nursing homes;
- Provided more employment and day services for people with developmental disabilities;
- Provided a 1 percent raise for classified K-12 staff – these are the lowest-paid K-12 employees.

Our budget also contained several components designed to get people back to work – or to help protect the jobs we currently have!

- We renewed expiring high-tech and rural incentives;
- We modified the excise tax for fruit and vegetable processors in Eastern Washington who are directly and indirectly responsible for 37,560 jobs;
- We provided tax incentives to the aluminum industry in Whatcom and Chelan counties, which is vital to retaining these industries during a rough energy market;
- We also provided incentives to promote solar energy, which could provide a minimum of 15 new jobs in Ferry County – this is the equivalent to 9,000 new jobs in King County! (*Senate Ways and Means*)

Passing the Senate's version of the supplemental budget provides us with a starting point. We'll begin negotiations with the House of Representatives soon. But you can be sure, any budget I vote for will have an eye towards the future while protecting our state's vulnerable today. Thanks again for letting me represent you and your interests in Olympia.

joyce

Sen. Joyce Mulliken, 13th Legislative District